



## Sample Family Entry

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- Names in ALL CAPS are in the bloodline of the author
- Uppercase letters in parenthesis are in-text source citations, i.e. (BAT). The full source would be listed in the Source Appendix at the end of the book

# Chapter 6

**JAMES MASON BYERS** (Feb 12, 1814 - Jul 24, 1898)

**MARY MORRISON** (Jul 12, 1813 - June 11, 1876) \*didn't marry

Parmela Marshall (Sep 13, 1817 - Oct 25, 1838)

Hannah McVicker (Feb 3, 1829 - Jul 31, 1913)

JAMES was born in Mercer Co, PA, in the town of Mercer. He fathered MARIAH out of wedlock with MARY MORRISON in 1834. He went on to marry Parmela Marshall in Mobile, AL on May 30, 1836. She was the grand-niece of Chief Justice John Marshall, the nation's 4th Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

The couple settled in Mahoning Twp, Mercer Co, PA, the area that later became Pulaski Twp, Lawrence Co, PA. They had one child and Parmela died just two months after giving birth.

JAMES then married Hannah McVicker, a woman fifteen years his junior, in Pennsylvania. They lived for awhile in Mahoning Twp but, by 1850, moved to the town of Greenville, Mercer Co, PA. JAMES had a total of eleven children:

With MARY MORRISON:

1. MARIAH MATILDA MORRISON (Dec 2, 1834 - Feb 6, 1917) married JOSIAH GREER

With Parmela Marshall

2. Samuel Hawkins Marshall Byers (Jul 23, 1838 - May 25, 1933) married Margaret Gilmour.

With Hannah McVicker:

3. Sarah P Byers (Jul 7, 1840 - Jan 19, 1875) married John B Aldon
4. Anna M Byers (Feb 13, 1842 - Sep 11, 1905) married Samuel Erwin Morlan
5. James W Byers (Mar 21, 1845 - Aug 10, 1927) married Maria Antoinette Fetters
6. Henry V Byers M.D. (Feb 1848 - Jan 5, 1935) married Mary Elizabeth Kendall
7. John D Byers (Apr 1, 1850 - Dec 8, 1931) married Margaret S Robertson
8. Lydia J Byers (Sep 1851 - 1937) married John Moore
9. Caroline E Byers (Jun 26, 1855 - Apr 9, 1948) married David B Lyons
10. Arminta Byers (1858 - Jun 1947) married Richard Hull
11. Catherine Byers (Sep 25, 1867 - May 17, 1903) unmarried

In 1851, JAMES and his family moved Burlington, IA then in 1853 settled in Oskaloosa, Mahaska Co, IA. He had moved there a few years after his sister Mary Jane and her husband Andrew J Morrison moved to Unionville, IA, 35 miles south of where JAMES settled.

JAMES is considered one of the most prominent pioneers of Mahaska Co, IA. He was a brick mason contractor and built all of the earlier brick buildings in Oskaloosa. He opened the first coal mine in the county and was a successful businessman as well as a patriotic and generous one.

An article in the Des Moines Register newspaper read:

*"He had two sons in the civil war, and during all of its progress devoted himself to his country's cause, spending in the relief of soldiers and other patriotic manner the entire fortune which he had previously accumulated, so that he was obliged to begin his business career over at the close of hostilities."*

De Moines Register, Jul 25, 1898, p5

Due to his success, he was able to retire in his 60s. JAMES died at the age of 85 in Mahaska Co, IA. After he passed away, his wife Hannah first lived with their daughter Arminta Byers-Hull and then at their son John's home where she passed away at the age of 84. JAMES and Hannah are buried at Forest Cemetery, Oskaloosa, IA.

## Summary of JAMES BYERS' children:

### **1. MARIAH MATILDA MORRISON (Dec 2, 1834 - Feb 6, 1917)**

JOSIAH GREER (Sep 13, 1827 - Mar 7, 1883)

Bloodline ancestors, their story continues in Chapter 7.

### **2. Samuel Hawkins Marshall Byers (Jul 23, 1838 - May 25, 1933)**

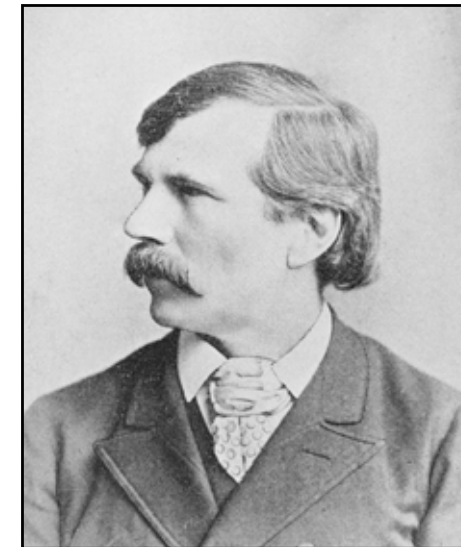
Margaret Gilmour (Oct 23, 1842 - Jan 30, 1922)

Samuel is undoubtedly the most professionally accomplished ancestor in this book. He was born in Pulaski, Mahoning Twp, Mercer Co, PA, the area that would later become Pulaski Twp, Lawrence Co, PA. Samuel's mother was a grand-niece of Chief Justice John Marshall, the nation's 4th Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. wShe passed away when he was just two months old.

Samuel's father remarried and had many more children. Sometime prior to 1850 his family moved to the town of Greenville, Mercer Co, PA. In 1851 the family moved to Burlington, Des Moines Co, IA. Two years later they moved to Oskaloosa, Mahaska Co, IA.

Samuel attended local schools and then studied law with an Oskaloosa attorney. He was admitted to the Iowa Bar in 1861 but never practiced law due to events leading up to the Civil War. According to a biographical book at the University of Iowa (BDI):

*"Byers was profoundly influenced by a visit to Memphis, TN, where he witnessed slaves being whipped and beaten. Thus, when the Southern states succeeded, Byers was one of the first to enlist in a company of volunteers from Newton, IA".*



Samuel HM Byers 1860s or 70s

Samuel enlisted on Jun 24, 1861 and was assigned to the 5th Iowa, Co B, at a rank of Corporal. He was an able soldier and got promoted to Quartermaster Sergeant on July 15, 1862. He was promoted again on Apr 23, 1862 to 1st Lieutenant.

During the Battle of Chattanooga in Tennessee, James was captured alongside 80 other soldiers from his regiment. This began a 16-month imprisonment, the details of which were extraordinary. See *"The Poet Soldier"* Snapshot for the story of Samuel's amazing journey.

Samuel served in the Civil War for four years and mustered out on March 19, 1865. When he returned home to Iowa, he was commissioned a rank of brevet Major. A brevet rank is a rank of honor bestowed as a reward for gallant or meritorious conduct, but does not endow rank authority or increased pay.

On Jun 14, 1869, Samuel married Margaret Gilmour and that same year was appointed as United States Consul at Zurich, Switzerland, a post he held until 1884. As a consulate he lived in Switzerland and fostered international relations as well as acting as a point of contact for Americans in Switzerland.

Samuel and Margaret had two children, both born in Switzerland:

1. Lawrence Marshall Byers (Aug 18, 1872 - Jul 8, 1909)
2. Helen Byers (May 1874 - Jan 1882)

After living in Switzerland for almost fifteen years, Samuel was promoted to Consul General at Rome, Italy. It was a short-lived post as he was recalled at the start of President Cleveland's administration in 1885. He was later appointed Consul at St. Gall, then Consul-General at Switzerland. He returned to the United States for good in 1893.

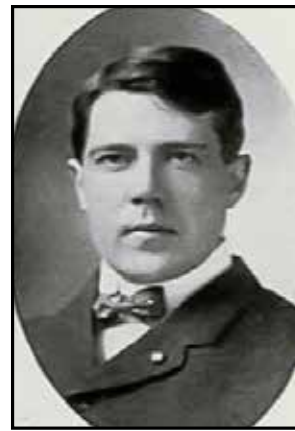
Samuel and his family settled in Des Moines, Polk Co, IA. Early in his life he discovered his passion for writing and wrote poems, magazine articles, and books his entire adult life. During his time in Des Moines he was able to devote his time to writing. He was an accomplished author and wrote many books, in both poetry and prose, some of the most well-known being "Twenty Years In Europe", "With Fire and Sword" and "The March to the Sea". In 1911, the state of Iowa declared Samuel's song "Song of Iowa" as its state song. In 1909 he was awarded an honorary Master of Arts degree from the University of Iowa.

As popular as his books were, his most famous work was the poem he wrote while in a Confederate prison in Colombia, SC entitled "Sherman's March to the Sea". This singular work would change the trajectory of Samuel's life, see "*The Poet Soldier*" for the story of this incredible work.

Samuel and Margaret's daughter had passed away in 1882 at the age of 7. Another family tragedy occurred when their son Lawrence died in 1909 during an oral surgery while abroad in London. He was only 36 years old.

By 1920 Samuel and his wife were living in Los Angeles, CA. It's possible he moved there to be closer to his sisters Lydia and Caroline. Samuel was retired but did spend time writing articles for the Los Angeles Times. His wife Margaret passed away in 1922 at the age of 79.

When Samuel passed away at the age of 94 it made front page news in the Des Moines Register newspaper and was reported in many other newspapers across the country. Samuel and his wife are buried at Forest Cemetery, Oskaloosa, Mahaska Co, IA.



Professor Lawrence Marshall Byers about 1900

### 3. Sarah P Byers (Jul 7, 1840 - Jan 19, 1875) John B Aldon (Dec 18, 1826 - Feb 12, 1911)

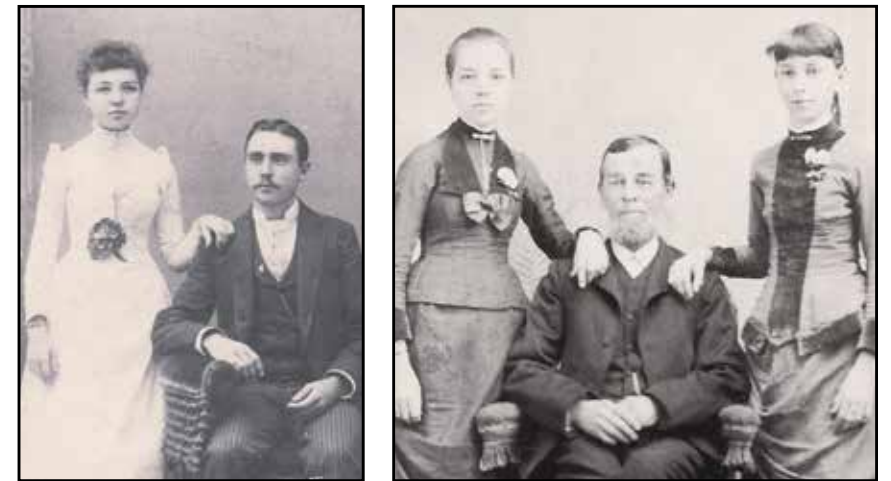
Sarah was born in Pulaski, Mahoning Twp, Mercer Co, PA, the area that would later become Pulaski Twp, Lawrence Co, PA. By 1850 the family was living in Greenville, Mercer Co, PA. In 1851 the family moved to Burlington, Des Moines Co, IA then in 1853 moved to Oskaloosa, Mahaska Co, IA.

Sarah married widower John B Aldon, a German immigrant, on Dec 16, 1867. She was his second wife and fifteen years his junior. The couple lived in the town of Oskaloosa, IA and had two children:

1. Margaret May Aldon (Jul 5, 1869 - Dec 13, 1948) married Herbert La Rue
2. Alice Anna Aldon (Abt 1872 - Feb 16, 1897) married Harold H Phinney

John was a renowned watchmaker and jeweler who also dealt with musical instruments. In his earlier years there wasn't a significant demand for his trade so he started out repairing watches, clocks, jewelry and opened a barbershop to make a living. In 1887 he had been engaged in business longer than anyone else in Mahaska Co, IA.

Sarah passed away at the age of 34, only three years after the birth of her youngest daughter. John died over three decades later at the age of 84. John is buried at Forest Cemetery, Oskaloosa Twp, Mahaska County, IA. He is buried there with his first wife, Elizabeth. It's not known where Sarah was buried.



Left: Margaret Aldon and husband Herbert La Rue 1890  
Right: John B Aldon and daughters Margaret and Alice late 1800s

### 4. Anna M Byers (Feb 13, 1842 - Sep 11, 1905) Samuel Erwin Morlan (Nov 8, 1821 - Apr 2, 1906)

Anna was born either in Pulaski, Mahoning Twp, Mercer Co, PA or in Greenville, Mercer Co, PA. Mahoning Twp would later become Pulaski Twp, Lawrence Co, PA. By 1850 her family was living in Greenville, Mercer Co, PA. In 1851 the family moved to Burlington, Des Moines Co, IA then in 1853 moved to Oskaloosa, Mahaska Co, IA.

According to an article by Max Bixby, newspaper and date unknown, in 1873 Anna was hired as a teacher in White Rock City, Republic Co, KS. The town had recently been formed by a small group of men, one of them being Samuel E Morlan. He was formerly a gold miner in California during the gold rush and moved to Kansas a wealthy man.

When Anna was hired, Sam was a merchant as well as a school board member. One year later the couple married, Sam was more than 20 years older than Anna. They had three children:

1. Clara M Morlan (May 18, 1875 - Feb 1943) married Robert W Garman
2. Fred Byers Morlan (Oct 17, 1877 - Nov 9, 1965) married Maude Angle
3. Samuel E Morlan (Sep 11, 1881 - Aug 1974) married Ethel

In 1880 Sam was still a merchant and Anna worked as a milliner, one who makes or sells womens' hats. After that they were farmers.

Anna passed away at the age of 63, Samuel the next year at the age of 84. The couple are buried at White Rock Cemetery, Republic Co, KS

#### 5. James W Byers (Mar 21, 1845 - Aug 10, 1927)

Maria Antionette Feters (1847 - 1904)

James was born either in Pulaski, Mahoning Twp, Mercer Co, PA or in Greenville, Mercer Co, PA. Mahoning Twp would later become Pulaski Twp, Lawrence Co, PA. By 1850 his family was living in Greenville, Mercer Co, PA. In 1951 the family moved to Burlington, Des Moines Co, IA then in 1853 moved to Oskaloosa, Mahaska Co, IA.

On Nov 21, 1863, at the age of 18, James enlisted for service in the Civil War. He was assigned to Co F, 4th Iowa Cavalry. He served until the end of the war and mustered out in Aug of 1865.

He returned to Iowa and wed Maria Feters. The couple settled in Oregon Twp, Washington Co, IA where James worked as a blacksmith. The couple had four children:

1. Marshall Samuel Byers (Aug 25, 1867 - Nov 8, 1957) married Francis R Foote
2. Florence Arminta Byers (1875 - 1911) married Nels C Anderson
3. Eva Mary Byers (Jul 11, 1884 - Apr 12, 1928) married Robert C Beasley
4. Elsie May Byers (Mar 9, 1888 - 1961) married Edward Watkins

Based on the birthplaces of their children, the Byers family moved around quite a bit:

- In 1867 son Marshall was born in Ainsworth, IA, which is in Oregon Twp, Washington Co and the family was living there during the 1870 census.
- In 1875 daughter Florence was born in White Rock City, KS. James' sister Anna Byers-Morlan lived here so that's likely what drew them to that location.
- In 1880 the family lived in Caldwell Twp, Appanoose Co, IA, 100 miles west of Ainsworth, IA.
- In 1884 daughter Eva Mary Byers was born in Fremont, IA, which is about 60 miles west of Ainsworth IA.
- In 1888 youngest daughter Elsie was born in Iowa, exact location unknown. 1888 is the last known time the family was all together.

By 1897 James was living in a Home for Disabled Soldiers in Marshall Twp, Linn Co, IA due to blindness. He was in and out of the home several times over many years.

In 1900 his eldest two children were each married and with their new families, younger daughter Eva was living in a boarding house in Cedar Rapids, IA, and youngest child Elsie was living in White Rock City, KS, with James' sister Anna Byers-Morlan.



James W Byers and wife Marie Feters around 1870

There were no further records found regarding the location of his wife and she passed away in 1904 at the age of 57.

After 1900, daughter Elsie moved back to Iowa and was a waitress for two years at the Home for Disabled Vets where her father lived. She married Edward Watkins in 1905.

James' daughter Eva led quite an interesting life. She married Robert Beasley when she was 19. There are no records for him other than the marriage certificate. It's possible he passed away young as Eva then married George Lindy. According to Eva's obituary, the couple "were connected with the Ringling Brothers circus, 101 Ranch Wild West and other tented traveling attractions" (*Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette, Apr 12, 1928*).

James was still in the Linn Co, IA Soldiers' Home but by 1920 had moved in with his daughter Eva Byers-Lindy in Cedar Rapids, IA on South 4th St. He remained with Eva until he passed away at the age of 82. James and Maria Byers are both buried at Murdoch-Linwood Cemetery, Linn Co, Cedar Rapids, IA.

#### 6. Henry V Byers M.D. (Feb 1848 - Jan 5, 1935)

Mary Elizabeth Kendall (Nov 5, 1844 - Jan 8, 1928)

Henry was born either in Pulaski, Mahoning Twp, Mercer Co, PA or in Greenville, Mercer Co, PA. Mahoning Twp would later become Pulaski Twp, Lawrence Co, PA. By 1850 his family was living in Greenville, Mercer Co, PA. In 1951 the family moved to Burlington, Des Moines Co, IA then in 1853 moved to Oskaloosa, Mahaska Co, IA.

Henry married Mary on May 10, 1876 and the couple moved to the city of Newton, Jasper Co, IA where Henry opened a physician practice. The couple had five children:

1. Gibson Henry Byers (Abt 1877 - Nov 25, 1916) married Clara C Tucker
2. Charles M Byers (1878 - Sep 4, 1886)
3. Clarence Byers (Feb 1880 - unknown)
4. Roy Byers (Apr 4, 1881 - unknown)
5. Harold Charlson Byers (Oct 7, 1885 - unknown) married Hazel Risher

Henry worked as a physician and lived in Newton his whole life. His son Harold became a dentist and lived with his parents. Henry's wife Mary passed away in 1928 at the age of 83.

In 1930 Henry and his son Harold were living together with a housekeeper named Hazel Risher. Harold and Hazel married on Nov 15, 1936 when Harold was 51 years old and Hazel was about 36.

Henry passed away at the age of 86. He and his wife are buried at Newton Union Cemetery, Newton, Jasper Co, IA.

#### 7. John D Byers Sr (Apr 1, 1850 - Dec 8, 1931)

Margaret S Robertson (1858 - 1905)

John was born in Greenville, Mercer Co, PA. In 1951 the family moved to Burlington, Des Moines Co, IA then in 1853 moved to Oskaloosa, Mahaska Co, IA.

In 1870 he was living at home and working as an apprentice carpenter. He married Margaret on Dec 25, 1878 and they settled in the town of Oskaloosa. John continued to work as a carpenter and the couple had five children:



John D Byers Sr abt 1870

1. Ernest Robertson Byers (Dec 19, 1879 - Nov 16, 1941) married Greta Stahl
2. Harry Edwin Byers (1881 - 1959) married Ansie Marie Larson
3. John David Byers Jr (Aug 22, 1888 - 1971) married Ola
4. Francis Mason Byers (Jan 16, 1899 - Jun 16, 1899)
5. Margaret Byers (1897 - 1986) married Clifford C Pierson



John D Byers Jr  
early 1900s

John lived in the town of Oskaloosa his entire life. In 1905 his wife Margaret passed away at the age of 47. By 1930 he was living with his daughter Margaret on N Market St, Oskaloosa, IA.

John passed away at the age of 81. He and his wife are buried at Forest Cemetery, Oskaloosa, Mahaska Co, IA.

#### 8. Lydia J Byers (Sep 1851 - 1937)

John Moore (Oct 1847 - 1928)

Lydia was born in Oskaloosa, IA. In 1870, Lydia lived at home and worked as a teacher. She married John Moore in 1877. The couple had two children:

1. Claude Edwin Moore (Aug 31, 1877 - Feb 26, 1969) married Margaret Harlow
2. Lillian Moore (Oct 9, 1889 - Feb 1984) married Harry W Coffin

In 1880 the family lived in Jefferson Twp, Mahaska Co, IA where John was a farmer. By 1900 they had moved to Troy Twp, Monroe Co, IA and John was a landlord.

By 1910 they were back at their Jefferson Twp, Mahaska Co, IA farm. By 1920 they had moved to the City of Los Angeles, CA to live with their daughter Lillian and her husband. John worked as a Physician.

In 1928 John passed away at the age of 81. Lydia continued living with her daughter Lillian and passed away at the age of 85. John and Lydia are buried at Forest Lawn Memorial Park, Glendale, Los Angeles Co, CA.

#### 9. Caroline E Byers (Jun 26, 1855 - Apr 9, 1948)

David B Lyons (Abt 1856 - unknown)



Caroline Byers-Lyons, husband David and son Willard early 1900s

Caroline was born in Oskaloosa, IA. In 1880 Caroline, known as Clara, was working as a teacher. She married David Lyons on Jan 8, 1895. The couple had one child:

1. Willard Everett Lyons (Jun 29, 1884 - May 27, 1947) married Florence Lloyd

No documentation could be found about their middle years, the first document found was the 1920 Federal Census that had them living in Los Angeles, District 63, CA.

David passed away in 1924 at the age of 68 and is buried at Woodland Cemetery, Des Moines, Polk Co, IA. In 1940 Caroline was living alone with a border in Los Angeles, Los Angeles Co, CA. She passed away at the age of 92. It's unknown where she is buried.

#### 10. Arminta Byers (1858 - Jun 1947)

Richard Hull (1855 - 1924)

Arminta was born in Oskaloosa, IA. She married Richard Hull on Apr 3, 1878. The couple moved to Scott Twp, Mahaska Co, IA and started a family. Richard was a life-long farmer. They had four children:

1. Claire M Hull (1879 - 1954) married George L Fox
2. Homer H Hull (Feb 9, 1886 - Aug 1975) married Gail L Satchell
3. Donald Irving Hull (Apr 25, 1893 - May 1968) married Rena A DeLong then
4. Clarence Richard Hull (Nov 3, 1897 - 1944) married Ada Fultz

By 1900 the family moved to Oskaloosa, Mahaska Co, IA, on 13th St. By 1910 they had moved to Garfield Twp, Mahaska Co, IA.

Richard passed away in 1924 at the age of 69. The next record of Arminta is 1940 and she was living alone in Oskaloosa. She passed away at the age of 89. The couple are buried at Forest Cemetery, Oskaloosa, Mahaska Co, IA.

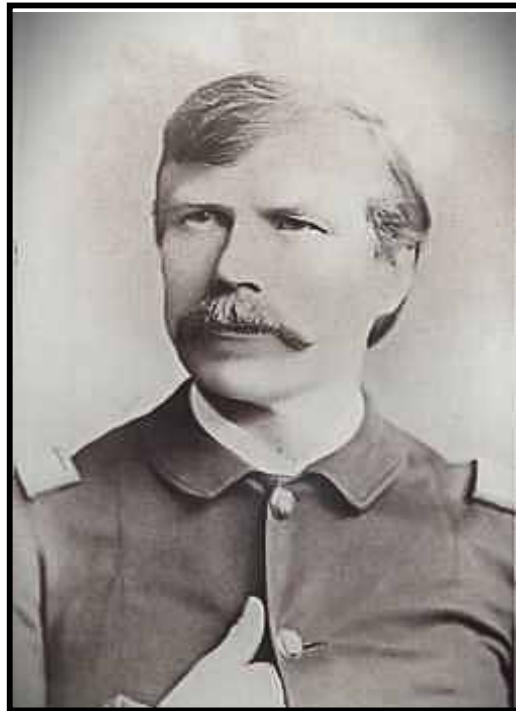
#### 11. Catherine Byers (Sep 25, 1867 - May 17, 1903)

Catharine was born in Oskaloosa, IA. The only record found for her is in 1900 she was living in Atlantic City, NJ working as a nurse. She lived at Childrens' Sea Shore House on South Ohio Ave.

She passed away at the age of 35. She is buried at Forest Cemetery, Oskaloosa, Mahaska Co, IA.

# The Poet Soldier

Samuel Hawkins Marshall Byers's military career is the stuff of legend in Iowa history. Having seen a slave being beaten in Tennessee he was one of the first to join the cause when the Civil War started. He enlisted with the 5th Iowa Infantry as a Corporal in Company B in 1861.



Byers was taken prisoner at the battle of Chattanooga, TN on November 26, 1863. He spent the next sixteen months in five different Confederate prisons.

He was initially taken to the infamous Libby Prison in Richmond, VA. He wrote letters to his brother John Byers describing the horrible living conditions; meager food rations, no glass in the windows to help keep out the cold, and vicious treatments by the guards. A transcription of select letters can be found in Appendix 1.

After seven months there the prisoners were transferred to Macon, GA. After some time there he traded with a guard for a Confederate Uniform and walked out of the camp on Jul 15, 1864. On July 23, 1864 he was captured by Confederate Calvary and sent back to the Macon prison.

The prisoners were then moved to Charleston, SC. Yellow fever broke out in Charleston so the prisoners were moved to a camp near Colombia, SC.

Byers again escaped by joining a detachment sent out to collect fuel and he disappeared into the forest. He was captured by Confederate Calvary and was sent to Camp Sorghum on the outskirts of Colombia, SC. It was in this prison that he heard of General Sherman's troops nearing the city of Colombia.

It was at this location that a slave who was assigned to bring food to the prisoners brought in a newspaper article inside a loaf of bread. The article held news of General Sherman's victory at Atlanta in November of 1864 and the march across Georgia to Savannah.

This news of Sherman's bold move to cut his supply lines and travel across Georgia inspired Byers to write a poem entitled "Sherman's March to the Sea". He had no idea how much this poem would change his life.

Another prisoner, W.O. Rockwell, heard the poem and set it to music and the song made its way around the prison. When prisoner LT Daniel W Tower was exchanged he left prison carrying a copy of the song inside his wooden leg. The song quickly became a national sensation. It gave Sherman's March it's famous name and became a Union rallying cry. Byers was still in prison and had no idea his song had become so popular.

As Sherman's troops closed in on Colombia the prisoners were transferred out of state but Byers and another man hid in the attic of the building. They escaped the prison

and made their way into the streets of Colombia. From a high doorstep they were able to see General Sherman and his staff enter the city in February 1865.

General Sherman heard Byers was there and was eager to meet him. He assigned Byers to his staff where he remained for the remainder of the campaign.

Sherman's troops took Savannah and the General selected Byers to travel through enemy lines to carry news of his victories to General Grant and President Lincoln. By the time he reached Washington D.C. the war was over.

General Sherman and Samuel Byers kept in touch after the war, Sherman even visiting Byers in Switzerland when he was Consul to Zurich.

The full telling of Samuel Byers military career in great detail can be found in The Palimpsest magazine (PAL).

## Sherman's March to the Sea

Our camp fires shone bright on the mountains  
That frowned on the river below,  
While we stood by our guns in the morning  
And eagerly watched for the foe--  
When a rider came out from the darkness  
That hung over a mountain and tree;  
And shouted, "Boys, up and be ready,  
For Sherman will march to the sea."

Then cheer upon cheer for bold Sherman  
Went up from each valley and glen  
And the bugles re-echoed the music  
That came from the lips of the men.  
For we knew that the stars in our banner  
More bright in their splendor would be,  
And that blessings from Northland would greet  
us  
When Sherman marched to the sea.

Then forward, boys, forward to battle,  
We marched on our wearisome way;  
And we stormed the wild hills of Resaca,--  
God bless those who fell on that day--  
Then Kenesaw, dark in its glory,  
Frowned down on the flag of the free,

But the East and the West bore our  
standards,  
And Sherman marched on to the sea.

Still onward we pressed, til our banners  
Swept out from Atlanta's grim walls,  
And the blood of the patriot dampened  
The soil where the traitor flag falls;  
But we paused not to weep for the fallen  
We slept by each river and tree;  
Yet we twined them a wreath of the laurel  
As Sherman marched down to the sea.

O, proud was our army that morning  
That stood where the pine darkly towers  
When Sherman said; "Boys you are  
weary,  
This day fair Savannah is ours."  
Then sang we a song for our chieftan  
That echoed over river and lea,  
And the stars in our banner shown  
brighter  
When Sherman marched down to the sea.